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C. Hawkins

2nd Lt. Tab A

NO OBJECTION
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

MEMO 3-20-2000

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, WH/4

SUBJECT: Policy Decisions Required for Conduct of
Strike Operations Against Government of
Cuba

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the current status of our preparations for the conduct of amphibious/airborne and tactical air operations against the Government of Cuba and to set forth certain requirements for policy decisions which must be reached and implemented if these operations are to be carried out.

2. Concept:

As a basis for the policy requirements to be presented below, it would appear appropriate to review briefly the concept of the strike operations contemplated and outline the objectives which these operations are designed to accomplish.

The concept envisages the seizure of a small lodgment on Cuban soil by an all-Cuban amphibious/airborne force of about 750 men. The landings in Cuba will be preceded by a tactical air preparation, beginning at dawn of D-1 Day. The primary purpose of the air preparation will be to destroy or neutralize all Cuban military aircraft and naval vessels constituting a threat to the invasion force. When this task is accomplished, attacks will then be directed against other military targets, including artillery parks, tank parks, military vehicles, supply dumps, etc. Close air support will be provided to the invasion force on D-Day and thereafter as long as the force is engaged in combat. The primary targets during this time will be opposing military formations in the field. Particular efforts will be made to interdict opposing troop movements against the lodgment.

The initial mission of the invasion force will be to seize and defend a small area, which under ideal conditions will include an airfield and access to the sea for logistic support. Plans must provide, however, for the eventuality that the force will be driven into a tight defensive formation which will preclude supply by sea or control of an airfield. Under such circumstances supply would have to be provided entirely by air drop. The primary objective of the force will be to survive and maintain its integrity on Cuban soil. There will be no early attempt to break out of the lodgment for further

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offensive operations unless and until there is a general uprising against the Castro regime or overt military intervention by United States forces has taken place.

It is expected that these operations will precipitate a general uprising throughout Cuba and cause the revolt of large segments of the Cuban Army and militia. The lodgment, it is hoped, will serve as a rallying point for the thousands who are ready for overt resistance to Castro but who hesitate to act until they can feel some assurance of success. A general revolt in Cuba, if one is successfully triggered by our operations, may serve to topple the Castro regime within a period of weeks.

If matters do not eventuate as predicted above, the lodgment established by our force can be used as the site for establishment of a provisional government which can be recognized by the United States, and hopefully by other American states, and given overt military assistance. The way will then be paved for United States military intervention aimed at pacification of Cuba, and this will result in the prompt overthrow of the Castro Government.

While this paper is directed to the subject of strike operations, it should not be presumed that other paramilitary programs will be suspended or abandoned. These are being intensified and accelerated. They include the supply by air and sea of guerrilla elements in Cuba, the conduct of sabotage operations, the introduction of specially trained paramilitary troops, and the expansion of our agent networks throughout the island.

3. Status of Forces:

a. Air. The Project tactical air force includes ten B-26 aircraft currently based in Guatemala and at Hahn Air Force Base. However, there are only five Cuban B-26 pilots available at this time who are considered to be of high technical competence. Six additional Cuban pilots are available, but their proficiency is questionable.

It is planned that seven C-54 and four C-46 transports will be available for strike operations. Here again, the number of qualified Cuban crews is insufficient. There is one qualified C-54 crew on hand at this time, and three C-46 crews.

Aviation ordnance for conduct of strike operations is yet to be positioned at the strike base in Nicaragua. Necessary construction and repairs at this base are now scheduled to commence, and there appears to be no obstacle to placing this facility in a state of readiness in time for operations as planned.

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Conclusions:

(1) The number of qualified Cuban B-26 crews available is inadequate for conduct of strike operations.

(2) The number of qualified Cuban transport crews is grossly inadequate for supply operations which will be required in support of the invasion forces and other friendly forces which are expected to join or operate in conjunction with it in many parts of Cuba. It is anticipated that multiple sorties will be required on a daily basis.

b. Maritime. Amphibious craft for the operation, including three LCU's and four LCVP's are now at Vieques, Puerto Rico, where Cuban crew training is progressing satisfactorily. These craft with their crews will soon be ready for operations.

The BARBARA J (LCI), now enroute to the United States from Puerto Rico, requires repairs which may take up to two weeks for completion. Its sister ship, the BLAGAR, is outfitting in Miami, and its crew is being assembled. It is expected that both vessels will be fully operational by mid-January at the latest.

In view of the difficulty and delay encountered in purchasing, outfitting and readying for sea the two LCI's, the decision has been reached to purchase no more major vessels, but to charter them instead. The motor ship, RIO ESCONDIDO (converted TSS) will be chartered this week and one additional steam ship, somewhat larger, will be chartered early in February. Both ships belong to a Panamanian Corporation controlled by the (ASOCIACION) of Cuba, who are actively cooperating with this project. These two ships will provide sufficient lift for troops and supplies in the invasion operation.

Continuation:

Maritime assets required will be available in ample time for strike operations in late February.

c. Ground. There are approximately 500 US personnel now in training in Guatemala. Results being achieved in the 1945 recruiting drive now underway in Miami indicate that extraordinary numbers may be required if the ranks of the Assault Brigade are to be filled to its planned strength of 750 by mid-January. Special recruiting teams composed of members of the Assault Brigade are being brought to Miami to assist in recruiting efforts in that city and possibly in other countries, notably Mexico and Venezuela.

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All recruits should be available by mid-January to allow at least four to six weeks of training prior to commitment.

The Assault Brigade has been formed into its basic organization (a quadrangular infantry battalion, including four rifle companies, and a weapons company). Training is proceeding to the extent possible with the limited number of military instructors available. This force cannot be adequately trained for combat unless additional military trainers are provided.

Conclusions:

(1) It is probable that the Assault Brigade can reach its planned strength of 770 prior to commitment, but it is possible that upwards of 100 of these men will be recruited too late for adequate training.

(2) Unless U. S. Army Special Forces training teams as requested are sent promptly to Guatemala, the Assault Brigade cannot be readied for combat by late February as planned and desired.

(3) The Assault Brigade should not be committed to action until it has received at least four and preferably six weeks of training under supervision of the U. S. Army teams. This means that the latter half of February is the earliest satisfactory time for the strike operation.

4. Major Policy Questions Requiring Resolution:

In order that planning and preparation for the strike operation may proceed in an orderly manner and correct positioning of hundreds of tons of supplies and equipment can be effected, a number of firm decisions concerning major questions of policy are required. These are discussed below.

a. The Concept Itself.

Discussion. The question of whether the incoming administration of President-elect Kennedy will concur in the conduct of the strike operations outlined above needs to be resolved at the earliest possible time. If these operations are not to be conducted, then preparations for them should cease forthwith in order to avoid the needless waste of great human effort and many millions of dollars. Recruitment of additional Cuban personnel should be stopped, for every new recruit who is not employed in operations as intended presents an additional problem of eventual disposition.

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Recommendation. That the Director of Central Intelligence attempt to determine the position of the President-Elect and his Secretary of State-Designate in regard to this question as soon as possible.

b. Timing of the Operation.

If Army Special Forces training teams are made available and dispatched to Guatemala by mid-January, the Assault Brigade can achieve acceptable readiness for combat during the latter half of February, 1961. All other required preparations can be made by that same time. The operation should be launched during this period. Any delay beyond 1 March, 1961, would be inadvisable for the following reasons:

(1) It is doubtful that Cuban forces can be maintained at our Guatemalan training base beyond 1 March 1961. Pressures upon the Government of Guatemala may become unmanageable if Cuban ground troops are not removed by that date.

(2) Cuban trainees cannot be held in training for much longer. Many have been in the camp for months under most austere and restrictive conditions. They are becoming restive and if not committed to action soon there will probably be a general lowering of morale. Large-scale desertions could occur with attendant possibilities of surfacing the entire program.

(3) While the support of the Castro Government by the Cuban populace is deteriorating rapidly and time is working in our favor in that sense, it is working to our disadvantage in a military sense. Cuban jet pilots are being trained in Czechoslovakia and the appearance of modern radar throughout Cuba indicates a strong possibility that Castro may soon have an all-weather jet intercept capability. His ground forces have received vast quantities of military equip. from the Bloc countries, including medium and heavy tanks, field artillery, heavy mortars and anti-aircraft artillery. Bloc technicians are training his forces in the use of this formidable equipment. Undoubtedly, within the near future Castro's hard core of loyal armed forces will achieve technical proficiency in the use of available modern weapons.

(4) Castro is making rapid progress in establishing a Communist-style police state which will be difficult to upset by any means short of overt intervention by U. S. military forces.

Recommendation. That the strike operation be conducted in the latter half of February, and not later than 1 March 1961.

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c. Air Strikes.

The question has been raised in some quarters as to whether the amphibious/airborne operation could not be mounted without tactical air preparation or support or with minimal air support. It is axiomatic in amphibious operations that control of air and sea in the objective area is absolutely required. Our Cuban Air Force and naval vessels capable of opposing our landing must be knocked out or neutralized before our amphibious shipping makes its final run into the beach. If this is not done, we will be courting disaster. Also, since our invasion force is very small in comparison to forces which may be thrown against it, we must compensate for numerical inferiority by effective tactical air support not only during the landing but thereafter as long as the force remains in combat. It is essential that opposing military targets such as artillery parks, tank parks, supply dumps, military convoys and troops in the field be brought under effective and continuing air attack. Psychological considerations also make such attacks essential. The spectacular aspects of air operations will go far toward producing the uprising in Cuba that we seek.

Recommendations.

- (1) That the air preparation commence not later than dawn of D minus 1 Day.
- (2) That any move to curtail the number of aircraft to be employed from those available be firmly resisted.
- (3) That the operation be abandoned if policy does not provide for use of adequate tactical air support.

d. Use of American Contract Pilots.

The paragraph above outlines the requirement for precise and effective air strikes, while an earlier paragraph points up the shortage of qualified Cuban pilots. It is very questionable that the limited number of Cuban B-26 pilots available to us can produce the desired results unless augmented by highly skillful American contract pilots to serve as section and flight leaders in attacks against the more critical targets. The Cuban pilots are inexperienced in war and of limited technical competence in navigation and gunnery. There is reason also to suspect that they may lack the motivation to take the stern action required against targets in their own country. It is considered that the success of the operation will be jeopardized unless a few American contract B-26 pilots are employed.

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With regard to logistical air operations, the shortage of Cuban crews has already been mentioned. There is no prospect of producing sufficient Cuban C-54 crews to man the naval C-54 aircraft to be used in the operation. Our experience to date with the Cuban transport crews has left much to be desired. It is concluded that the only satisfactory solution to the problem of air logistical support of the strike force and other forces joining it will be to employ a number of American contract crews.

Recommendation.

That policy approval be obtained for use of American contract crews for tactical and transport aircraft in compensation of the inadequate number of Cuban crews available.

e. Use of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.

The airfield at Puerto Cabezas is essential for conduct of the strike operation unless a base is made available in the United States. Our air base in Guatemala is 300 miles from central Cuba -- too distant for B-26 operations and for air supply operations of the magnitude required, using the C-46 and C-54 aircraft. Puerto Cabezas is only 500 miles from central Cuba -- acceptable, although too distant to be completely desirable, for B-26 and transport operations.

Puerto Cabezas will also serve as the staging area for landing assault troops into transports such more satisfactorily than Puerto Barrios, Guatemala which is exposed to hostile observation and lacks security. It is planned that troops will be flown in from the air base to Puerto Cabezas, placed in covered trucks, loaded over the side at night into amphibious shipping, which will then immediately retire to sea.

Conclusion:

The strike operation cannot be conducted unless the Puerto Cabezas air facility is available for our use, or unless an air base in the United States is made available.

Recommendation. That firm policy be obtained for use of Puerto Cabezas as an air strike base and staging area.

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f. Use of U. S. Air Base for Logistical Flights.

An air base in southern Florida would be roughly twice as close to central Cuba as Puerto Cabezas. This means that the logistical capability of our limited number of transport aircraft would be almost doubled if operated from Florida rather than Puerto Cabezas. Logistical support of the strike force in the target would be much more certain and efficient if flown from Florida.

There is also a possibility that once the strike operations commence, conditions would develop which would force us out of the Nicaraguan air base. Without some flexibility of operational capability including an additional logistical support air base with pre-positioned supplies in the United States, we could conceivably be confronted with a situation wherein the Assault Brigade would be left entirely without logistical air support. Supply by sea cannot be relied upon, for the Brigade may be driven by superior forces from the beach area. Such a situation could lead to complete defeat of the Brigade and failure of the mission.

It seems obvious that the only real estate which the United States can, without question, continue to employ once the operation commences is its own soil. Therefore, an air base for logistical support should be provided in the United States. This will offer the possibility of continued, flexible operations, if one or both of our bases in Guatemala and/or Nicaragua are lost to our use.

Recommendation.

That policy be established to permit use of an air base in southern Florida (preferably Opa Locka which is now available to us and has storage facilities for supplies) for logistical support flights to Cuba.

J. Hawkins
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Chief, WII/4/PM

Distribution:
Original & 2 - Addressee

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TRANSCRIPTION FOLLOWS

SECRET

4 January 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, WH/4

SUBJECT: Policy Decisions Required for Conduct of Strike Operations Against Government of Cuba

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the current status of our preparations for the conduct of amphibious/airborne and tactical air operations against the Government of Cuba and to set forth certain requirements for policy decisions which must be reached and implemented if these operations are to be carried out.

2. Concept:

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The concept envisages the seizure of a small lodgement on Cuban soil by an all-Cuban amphibious/airborne force of about 750 men. The landings in Cuba will be preceded by a tactical air preparation, beginning at dawn of D-1 Day. The primary purpose for the air preparation will be to destroy or neutralize all Cuban military aircraft and naval vessels constituting a threat to the invasion force. When this task is accomplished, attacks will then be directed against other military targets, including artillery parks, tank parks, military vehicles, supply dumps, etc. Close air support will be provided to the invasion force on D-Day and thereafter as long as the force is engaged in combat. The primary targets during this time will be opposing military formations in the field. Particular efforts will be made to interdict opposing troop movements against the lodgement.

The initial mission of the invasion force will be to seize and defend a small area, which under ideal conditions will include an airfield and access to the sea for logistic support. Plans must provide, however, for the eventuality that the force will be driven into a tight defensive formation which will preclude supply by sea or control of an airfield. Under such circumstances supply would have to be provided entirely by air drop. The primary objective of the force will be to survive and maintain its integrity on Cuban soil. There will be no early attempt to break out of the lodgement for further offensive operations unless and until there is a general uprising against the Castro regime or overt military intervention by United States forces has taken place.

It is expected that these operations will precipitate a general uprising throughout Cuba and cause the revolt of large segments of the Cuban Army and Militia. The lodgement, it is hoped, will serve as a rallying point for the thousands who are ready for overt resistance to Castro but who hesitate to act until they can feel some assurance of success. A general revolt in Cuba, if one is successfully triggered by our operations, may serve to topple the Castro regime within a period of weeks.

If matters do not eventuate as predicted above, the lodgement established by our force can be used as the site for establishment of a provisional government which can be recognized by the United States, and hopefully by other American states, and given overt military assistance. The way will then be paved for United States military intervention aimed at pacification of Cuba, and this will result in the prompt overthrow of the Castro Government.

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3. Status of Forces:

a. Air. The Project tactical air force includes ten B-26 aircraft currently based in Guatemala and at Eglin Air Force Base. Moreover, there are only five Cuban B-26 pilots available at this time who are considered to be of high technical competence. Six additional Cuban pilots are available, but their proficiency is questionable.

It is planned that seven C-54 and four C-46 transports will be available for strike operations. Here again, the number of qualified Cuban crews is insufficient. There is one qualified C-54 crew on hand at this time, and three C-46 crews.

Aviation ordinance for conduct of strike operations is yet to be positioned at the strike base in Nicaragua. Necessary construction and repairs at this base are now scheduled to commence, and there appears to be no obstacle to placing this facility in a state of readiness in time for operations as planned.

Conclusions:

(1) The number of qualified Cuban B-26 crews available is inadequate for conduct of strike operations.

(2) The number of qualified Cuban transport crews is grossly inadequate for supply operations which will be required in support of the invasion

force and other friendly forces which are expected to join or operate in conjunction with it in many parts of Cuba. It is anticipated that multiple sorties will be required on a daily basis.

b. Maritime. Amphibious craft for the operation, including three LCU's and four LCVP's are now at Vieques, Puerto Rico, where Cuban crew training is progressing satisfactorily. These craft with their crews will soon be ready for operations.

The BARBARA J (LCI), now enroute [sic] to the United States from Puerto Rico, requires repairs which may take up to two weeks for completion. Its sister ship, the BLAGAR, is outfitting in Miami, and its crew is being assembled. It is expected that both vessels will be fully operational by mid-January at the latest.

In view of the difficulty and delay encountered in purchasing, outfitting and readying for sea the two LCI's, the decision has been reached to purchase no more major vessels, but to charter them instead. The motor ship, RIO ESCONDIDO (converted [illegible]) will be chartered this week and one additional steam ship, somewhat longer, will be chartered early in February. Both ships belong to a Panamanian Corporation controlled by the GARCIA family of Cuba, who are actively cooperating with this Project. These two ships will provide sufficient lift for troops and supplies in the invasion operation.

Conclusion:

Maritime crews required will be available in ample time for strike operations in late February.

c. Ground. There are approximately 500 Cuban personnel now in training in Guatemala. Results being achieved in the FRD recruiting drive now underway in Miami indicate that extraordinary measures may be required if the ranks of the Assault Brigade are to be filled to the planned strength of 750 by mid-January. Special recruiting teams comprised of members of the Assault Brigade are being brought to Miami to assist in recruiting efforts in that city and possibly in other countries, notably Mexico and Venezuela. All recruits should be available by mid-January to allow at least four to six weeks of training prior to commitment.

The Assault Brigade has been formed into its basic organization (a quadrangular infantry battalion, including four rifle companies, and a weapons company). Training is proceeding to the extent possible with the limited number of military instructors available. This force cannot be adequately trained for combat unless additional military trainers are provided.

Conclusions:

(1) It is probable that the Assault Brigade can reach its planned strength of 750 prior to commitment, but it is possible that upwards of 100 of these men will be recruited too late for adequate training.

(2) Unless U.S. Army Special Forces training teams as requested are sent promptly to Guatemala, the Assault Brigade cannot be readied for combat by late February as planned and desired.

(3) The Assault Brigade should not be committed to action until it has received at least four and preferably six weeks of training under supervision of the U.S. Army teams. This means that the latter half of February is the earliest satisfactory time for the strike operation.

4. Major Policy Questions Requiring Resolution:

In order that planning and preparation for the strike operation may proceed in an orderly manner and correct positioning of hundreds of tons of supplies and equipment can be effected, a number of final decisions concerning major questions of policy are required. These are discussed below.

a. The Concept Itself.

Discussion: The question of whether the incoming administration of President-elect Kennedy will concur in the conduct of the strike operations outlined above needs to be resolved at the earliest possible time. If these operations are not to be conducted, then preparations for them should cease forthwith in order to avoid the needless waste of great human effort and many millions of dollars. Recruitment of additional Cuban personnel should be stopped, for every new recruit who is not employed in operations as intended presents an additional problem of eventual disposition.

Recommendation. That the Director of Central Intelligence attempt to determine the position of the President-Elect and his Secretary of State-Designate in regard to this question as soon as possible.

b. Timing of the Operation.

If Army Special Forces training teams are made available and dispatched to Guatemala by mid-January, the Assault Brigade can achieve acceptable readiness for combat during the latter half of February, 1961. All other required preparations can be made by that same time. The operation should be launched during this period. Any delay beyond 1 March, 1961, would be inadvisable for the following reasons:

(1) It is doubtful that Cuban forces can be maintained at our

Guatemalan training base beyond 1 March 1961. Pressures upon the Government of Guatemala may become unmanageable if Cuban ground troops are not removed by that date.

(2) Cuban trainees cannot be held in training for much longer. Many have been in the camp for months under most austere and restrictive conditions. They are becoming restive and if not committed to action soon there will probably be a general lowering of morale. Large-scale desertions could occur with attendant possibilities of surfacing the entire program.

(3) While the support of the Castro Government by the Cuban populace is deteriorating rapidly and time is working in our favor in that sense, it is working to our disadvantage in a military sense. Cuban jet pilots are being trained in Czechoslovakia and the appearance of modern radar throughout Cuba indicates a strong possibility that Castro may soon have an all-weather jet intercept capability. His ground forces have received vast quantities of military equipment from the Bloc countries, including medium and heavy tanks, field artillery, heavy mortars and anti-aircraft artillery. Bloc technicians are training his forces in the use of this formidable equipment. Undoubtedly, within the near future Castro's hard core of loyal armed forces will achieve technical proficiency in the use of available modern weapons.

(4) Castro is making rapid progress in establishing a Communist-style police state which will be difficult to unseat by any means short of overt intervention by U.S. military forces

Recommendation. That the strike operation be conducted in the latter half of February, and not later than 1 March 1961.

c. Air Strikes.

The question has been raised in some quarters as to whether the amphibious/airborne operation could not be mounted without tactical air preparation or support or with minimal air support. It is axiomatic in amphibious operations that control of air and sea in the objective area is absolutely required. The Cuban Air Force and naval vessels capable of opposing our landing must be knocked out or neutralized before our amphibious shipping makes its final run into the beach. If this is not done, we will be courting disaster. Also, since our invasion force is very small in comparison to forces which may be thrown against it, we must compensate for numerical inferiority by effective tactical air support not only during the landing but thereafter as long as the force remains in combat. It is critical that opposing military targets such as artillery parks, tank parks, supply dumps, military convoys and troops in the field be brought under effective and continuing air attack. Psychological considerations also make such attacks essential. The spectacular impacts of air operations will go far toward producing the uprising in Cuba that we seek.

Recommendations.

(1) That the air preparation commence not later than dawn of D minus 1 Day.

(2) That any move to curtail the number of aircraft to be deployed from those available be firmly resisted.

(3) That the operation be abandoned if policy does not provide for use of adequate tactical air support.

d. Use of American Contract Pilots.

The paragraph above outlines the requirement for precise and effective air strikes, while an earlier paragraph points up the shortage of qualified Cuban pilots. It is very questionable that the limited number of Cuban B-26 pilots available to us can produce the desired results unless augmented by highly skillful American contract pilots to serve as section and flight leaders in attacks against the more critical targets. The Cuban pilots are inexperienced in war and of limited technical competence in navigation and gunnery. There is reason also to support that they may lack the motivation to take the stern measures required against targets in their own country. It is considered that the success of the operation will be jeopardized unless a few American contract B-26 pilots are employed.

With regard to logistical air operations, the shortage of Cuban crews has already been mentioned. There is no prospect of producing sufficient Cuban C-54 crews to run the seven C-54 aircraft to be used in the operation. Our experience to date with the Cuban transport crews has left much to be desired. It is concluded that the only satisfactory solution to the problem of air logistical support of the strike force and other forces joining it will be to employ a number of American contract crews.

Recommendation.

That policy approval be obtained for use of American contract crews for tactical and transport aircraft in augmentation of the inadequate number of Cuban crews available.

e. Use of Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.

The airfield at Puerto Cabezas is essential for conduct of the strike operation unless a base is made available in the United States. Our air lease in Guatemala is 800 miles from central Cuba—too distant for B-26 operations and for air supply operations of the magnitude required, using the C-46 and C-54 aircraft. Puerto Cabezas is only 500 miles from central Cuba—

acceptable, although too distant to be completely desirable, for B-26 and transport operations.

Puerto Cabezas will also serve as the staging area for landing assault troops into transports much more satisfactorily than Puerto Barrios, Guatemala which is exposed to hostile observation and lacks security. It is planned that troops will be flown in [illegible] Guatemala to Puerto Cabezas, placed in covered trucks, loaded over the train at night into amphibious shipping, which will then immediately retire to sea.

Conclusion:

The strike operation cannot be conducted unless the Puerto Cabezas air facility is available for our use, or unless an air base in the United States is made available.

Recommendation. That firm policy be obtained for use of Puerto Cabezas as an air strike base and staging area.

f. Use of U.S. Air Base for Logistical Flights.

An air base in southern Florida would be roughly twice as close to central Cuba as Puerto Cabezas. This means that the logistical capability of our limited number of transport aircraft would be almost doubled if operated from Florida rather than Puerto Cabezas. Logistical support of the strike force in the target would be much more certain and efficient if flown from Florida.

There is also a possibility that once the strike operations commence, conditions would develop which would force us out of the Nicaraguan air base. Without some flexibility of operational capability including an additional logistical support air base with pre-positioned supplies in the United States, we could conceivably be confronted with a situation wherein the Assault Brigade would be left entirely without logistical air support. Supply by sea cannot be relied upon, for the Brigade may be driven by superior forces from the beach area. Such a situation could lead to complete defeat of the Brigade and failure of the mission.

It seems obvious that the only real estate which the United States can, without question, continue to employ once the operation commences is its own soil. Therefore, an air base for logistical support should be provided in the United States. This will offer the possibility of continued, flexible operations, if one or both of our bases in Guatemala and/or Nicaragua are lost to our use.

Recommendation.

That policy be established to permit use of an air base in

southern Florida (preferably Opa Locka which is now available to us and has storage facilities for supplies) for logistical support flights to Cuba.

J. Hawkins
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Chief, WH/4/PM

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